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UPDATE

Northwest Power Planning Council

February 7, 1997

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Council Approves Funding for Fish Passage Center

At its January meeting in Kelso, Washington, the Council approved management changes proposed for the Fish Passage Center and requested the Bonneville Power Administration to fund the data-collection agency's work in 1997.

The management changes responded to concerns about the Center's operations that the Council raised in November. At that time, the Council asked Bonneville to extend the Center's 1996 funding for two months while the concerns were addressed.

"I am pleased that we have arrived at an acceptable resolution," Council Chair John Etchart of Montana said. "These changes will make the Center more accountable to the public, whose electricity dollars finance the Center."

The Fish Passage Center, based in Portland, designs the Columbia and Snake river salmon and steelhead smolt monitoring program, collects and analyzes smolt migration and river operation data, and serves as the technical advisor to the region's fish and wildlife managers. The managers recommend river flow and dam operations when juvenile salmon and steelhead are migrating to the Pacific Ocean, generally between mid-April and mid-October. The managers collectively make their recommendations through the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority, which is an association of theregion's state, tribal and federal fish and wildlife agencies.

The changes the Council approved are in three broad areas.

First, the Center will change its practices to improve access to the Center's data. Second, the Fish Passage Center director will report to the executive director of the Basin Authority. This will improve policy oversight of the Center, Etchart said. Third, the Center will strive for a better balance between the needs of salmon and steelhead and the needs of fish that don't migrate to the ocean, such as trout, when making its recommendations to the dam operators.

Meetings

The following meetings are open to the public unless otherwise noted. Call the Council central office to receive an agenda. Meeting times, locations and agenda items are changed occasionally. To confirm, call the Council central office before the meeting.

Council meetings: February 18-19 at the Red Lion Downtowner in Boise, Idaho; April 1-2 at the Inn of the Seventh Mountain in Bend, Oregon; May 13-14 in eastern Washington.

Council offices, with the exception of the Pullman, Washington, office, will be closed on Monday, February 17, in observance of Presidents' Day.

Experts Tell Transition Board to Act Quickly to Influence Energy Legislation

Legislation affecting the Pacific Northwest electric energy system likely won't be completed in 1997, but changes in law will be proposed, and electric utilities, ratepayers and others must act together — and quickly — to influence it, a panel of experts told the Northwest Energy Review Transition Board at its first meeting on January 30 in Portland.

The four Northwest governors appointed the Transition Board last December after receiving the final report of the Comprehensive Review of the Northwest Energy System.

The Review was a year-long effort by a 20-member committee appointed by the governors to recommend ways the Northwest can take advantage of increasing energy industry competition while also preserving the low-cost power generated by the region's predominately hydroelectric power system.

"The challenge before us now is how best to move toward implementing these recommendations, with particular emphasis on federal power marketing" according to a report prepared for the Transition Board by the Bonneville Power Administration and representatives of some of Bonneville's industrial and public utility customers. A key recommendation from the Comprehensive Review Steering Committee is that Bonneville

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sell its electricity by subscription after the year 2001, when current power sales contracts expire. Through the subscription system, Bonneville's customers would be able to purchase specified amounts of power at cost, with incentives for customers to sign long-term (15 to 20 years) contracts. Subscription sales would ensure Bonneville continues to have customers for its power as competition in the energy industry increases.

The Transition Board agreed to work with Bonneville and its customers to implement the subscription process by 2001, the schedule proposed by the Steering Committee.

Randy Hardy, Bonneville's administrator, met briefly with the Transition Board and noted the need to move quickly: "We need to know soon, in the next year or so, whether we have a process that will work, and not create a big political vacuum that gets filled by others," Hardy said.

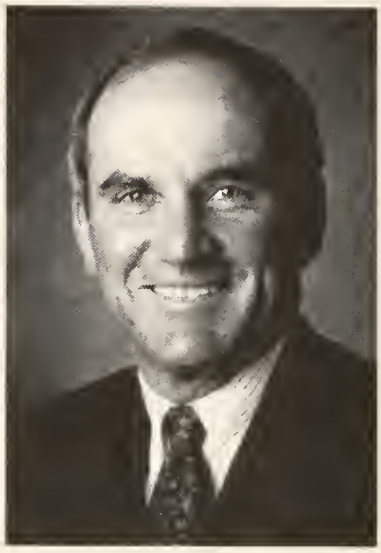
Meanwhile, Northwest members of Congress are feeling a sense of urgency, as well. Jeff Stier, an aide to U.S. Representative Peter DeFazio (D-Oregon), told the Transition Board the region's congressional delegation is beginning to prepare for national energy law changes that likely will be proposed this year, including another effort by those outside the Northwest to sell Bonneville.

"The chances of legislation being proposed and moved out of committee, and possibly even to the floor of the House, in this Congress are very high; the chances of actually having something pass into law on national energy industry restructuring is somewhat dicier," Stier said. "But just the likelihood of some kind of legislation really demands that we in the delegation start talking early about developing our Northwest component of that legislation."

Through the Transition Board, with the assistance of Northwest Power Planning Council staff, the Comprehensive Review's recommendations already are being relayed to members of Congress and to legislators in the four Northwest states. Members of the Transition Board, who also represented the four governors on the Steering Committee of the Comprehensive Review, are John Etchart of Montana, chairman of the Power Planning Council; Todd Maddock of Idaho and Mike Kreidler of Washington, also Power Planning Council members; and Roy Hemmingway of Oregon, who is Governor John Kitzhaber's advisor on energy, fish and wildlife.

The Transition Board will meet every five weeks to receive progress reports and coordinate these efforts. The next meeting is scheduled for February 13 at the Council offices in Portland. To help disseminate information, the Transition Board will have a page on the Council's World Wide Web site, http://www.nwppc.org/trans.htm. A periodic newsletter also is planned.

For a copy of the Steering Committee's report, call the Northwest Power Planning Council at 800-222-3355 and request Document 96-CR26, or visit the Council's homepage at http://www.nwppc.org, or the Comprehensive Review's homepage, http://www.newsdata.com/enernet/review/review.html.



Etchart Re-elected Council Chair

Members of the Northwest Power Planning Council re-elected John Etchart, a Montana member of the Council, as chair of the agency at the Council's meeting in January in Kelso, Washington. The vote of the eight Council members was unanimous.

Etchart, of Helena, was appointed to the Council in 1993 by Montana Governor Marc Racicot.

The Council also unanimously elected John Brogoitti, an Oregon member, as vice chair. He was appointed to the Council in 1995 by Governor John Kitzhaber.

The Council's chair and vice chair each serve one-year terms.

Etchart named chairs for two of the Council's four committees. Washington member Ken Casavant will chair the Fish and Wildlife Committee, and Idaho member Todd Maddock will chair the Power Committee. Chairs for the Public Affairs and Executive committees will be named later, Etchart said.

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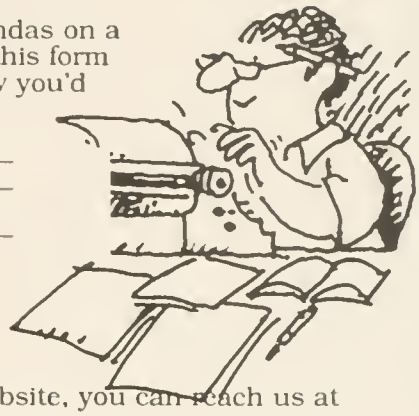

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Questions: Call Judi Hertz at the Council central office 503-222-5161 or 800-222-3355.
Thank you.

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Council Completes Appointments to Scientific Panel

On January 29, the Northwest Power Planning Council completed appointing an 11-member panel of scientists that will review fish and wildlife recovery projects proposed for funding under the Council's Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program.

All 11 scientists were nominated for the new panel, which will be called the Independent Scientific Review Panel, by the National Academy of Sciences. The new panel will begin working as soon as possible and will advise both the Council and the National Marine Fisheries Service on scientific matters.

The Council created the panel under the authority of an amendment to the Northwest Power Act. The amendment also directs the Council to appoint "peer review groups" from among the nominees. The Council expects to assemble the groups by the end of February.

Under the Council's program, each year project proposals are reviewed and prioritized by the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority, an association of state, federal and Indian tribal fish and wildlife managers. The Basin Authority then recommends projects to the Council, which reviews the projects and makes its own recommendations to Bonneville. The Independent Scientific Review Panel will review projects before they are submitted to the Council to ensure they "... are based on sound science principles, benefit fish and wildlife, and have a clearly defined objective and outcome with provisions for monitoring and evaluation of results," according to the amendment.

Members appointed to the Panel and their areas of expertise are:

Peter Bisson, Ph.D., stream ecosystems, fish production, population dynamics.

Charles Coutant, Ph.D., fisheries ecology, juvenile salmon migration.

Robert Francis, Ph.D., ocean fishery science.

Dan Goodman, Ph.D., environmental statistics, environmental modeling.

Susan Hanna, Ph.D., marine economics and policy, fisheries management.

Nancy Huntly, Ph.D., community and ecosystem ecology.

Jim Lichatowich, M.S., salmon ecology and life history.

Lyman McDonald, Ph.D., biometrics, experimental design, mark and recapture of fish.

Brian Riddell, Ph.D., international fisheries management, stock identification, salmonid biology.

Jack Stanford, Ph.D., large river and lake ecology.

Richard N. Williams, Ph.D., population and evolutionary genetics, ecology.

Northwest Power Planning Council

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Publications available

Order publications from the Council Portland office, see telephone numbers above. A listing of all Council publications circulated since 1987 also is available from the Portland central office. (♦ indicates document not yet released, but expected in the near future.)

NOTE: When requesting a publication, please use the publication number.

(97-1) *Competitive Energy Services Strategies in the Northwest: A Partial Eclipse of the Moon (prepared for the Northwest Power Planning Council by Jim Nybo and Ted Flanigan, November 25, 1996)*

(96-13) *Council By-Laws*

(96-12) *Fiscal Year 1998 Budget and Fiscal Year 1997 Revisions*

(96-11) *1996 Annual Report*

(96-10) *Report to Congress: Fish and Wildlife Governance and the Columbia River Hydropower System*

(96-9) *Draft Results of the Fish and Wildlife Managers' Review and Assessment of Fiscal Year 1997 Projects*

(96-6) *Return to the River: Restoration of Salmonid Fishes in the Columbia River Ecosystem (report by the Independent Scientific Group requested by the Northwest Power Planning Council)*

(96-CR28) *Verbatim transcript: Presentation of the Comprehensive Review Steering Committee Report to Governors Batt, Kitzhaber, Lowry and Racicot and the Governors' Remarks; December 12, 1996*

(96-CR26) *Final Report of the Steering Committee to the Governors, December 12, 1996*